



A Specter of War



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Chapter 1 by Roggen Wulf

There is but little along the highway between Silverfallet and Kiruna. The western coast of the Torneträsk is home to Abisko with its national park and precious little else. Except for the passing trains and the very occasional helicopter when there has been a road accident, it is a quiet place, forlorn sometimes. It was no place I would expect to hear the powerful engines that roared menacingly in the night not far from my bedroom.

My father told me of a boy about the same age I am now who was recruited to the Munckska at the time of Ådalen. He would have joined the Hemvärnet, but was instead transferred to the shores of Nakerjaure where in 1939 he trained fighters for the vinterkriget. After joining the Finns in the battle of Raate, he was sent to Oscarsborg festning, then to Hamar, to Elverum, and finally to Narvik.

What happened to him after Narvik, no one really knows. Some believe he was killed by the Germans, others that he was captured by the Soviets. My father says, though, that he continued to fight and when the war was over he returned to live alone in a cabin on the Torneträsk. That cabin, my father told me, is the dilapidated little shack beside our home. Long since abandoned, it has been shut up tight since before I was born. Tonight, though, I could hear its old door swinging freely on its hinges, the old metal creaking and groaning eerily in the darkness.

“What is that sound?” asked my little brother as we huddled together in my bed, fearful of what lay outside.

“It’s an Abrams,” I said. Through the window at the foot of my bed I watched the American tank as it stood rumbling outside my room.

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"A T-90," I replied, glancing behind me through the window at the head of my bed. A second, Russian tank sat half-concealed by the woodpile my father had stacked the previous summer.

Through the window to my left, a light caught my eye. In the periphery of my vision, I thought I saw a figure lit by lamplight in the doorway of the old cabin. When I looked in that direction, though, I saw nothing but the open door of the shack shifting in the wind. I was not the only one to notice. Both tank crews were pivoting their turrets to face the old cabin, temporarily taking their attention off from one another, which turned out to be a mistake.

Again the glow of lamplight appeared, but not where I had seen it before. This time when I looked in its direction, it did not disappear nor even falter. It burned steadily, and illuminated by it I caught sight of....

Chapter 2 by sarahmccall



Nothing that I would ever have called human, let alone a boy, but I knew it's deformed face from the newspaper article my father had shown me. It grinned, or seemed to with it's lips eaten away by insects, it's eyes glistening not from any human emotion that ought to put a twinkle in one's eye, but from the thousand writhing beetles that crawled freely through it's sockets. The tanks both fired at the same time, creating a burning crater in the ground, but it walked on, the remains of it's exposed organs burning in the cage of it's ribs not slowing it one bit. Then, a scream came from the T-90, someone had pried open the hatch from outside, I just saw the shape of it's skeletal legs before it disappeared into the machine, a hundred more decomposing figures flooded from the trees, it was time. Time for the skeleton war.

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